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SERMON AND CHARGE

AT THE

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ORDINATION

OF

MESSRS. BARNARD AND GRAY.

A

SERMON

PREACHED ON SUNDAY EVENING, NOV. 2, 1834,

AT THE ORDINATION

OF

CHARLES F. BARNARD AND FREDERICK T. GRAY,

AS MINISTERS AT LARGE IN BOSTON,

By JOSEPH TUCKERMAN;

WITH

THE CHARGE

By WILLIAM E. CHANNING.

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SERMON.

MATTHEW XI. 2–6.

Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Jesus, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

It is very obvious, I think, from these words, that John *was* offended with Jesus at the time when he sent his two disciples with the inquiry, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" John had for some time been imprisoned; and he was disappointed, — he was offended, that Jesus had done nothing to restore him to liberty. His was not, therefore, an inquiry for information of the claims of Jesus as the expected Messiah of the Jews. It was a query of complaint, if not of reproach. The reasoning in the Baptist's mind appears to have been, "Why cannot he, who is daily performing the most wonderful miracles, exert his miraculous power for my deliverance?" And how did Jesus meet this reasoning, and answer the querulous inquiry that was sent to him? By doing before the eyes of the messengers of John precisely what he did every day; and by preaching, as he every day preached to the multitudes that followed him. Having therefore detained these mes-

sengers as long as was necessary for his purpose, he said to them, "Go and tell your Master what ye have heard and seen." 'Go and tell him of my miracles and of my preaching. Tell him that ye have heard me address the poor, equally as the rich, upon the great subjects of their individual, and their common, immortal nature and interest. Tell him what you have seen of my sympathy with human want and suffering, and of my readiness to minister to human want and suffering. Go and ask him if he can think himself to be forgotten, or uncared for by me, when you have found me anxious to instruct the most ignorant; to raise the low, and the lowest about me from their degradation; to preach deliverance to every captive of sin, however abject his condition, and apparently lost to the capacity of virtue; and to bring into the liberty and happiness of the kingdom of God, even the most despised and wretched of the crowds around me? Go and tell him that you have heard me proclaim to such as these the interest of their heavenly Father in them, and the love of their heavenly Father for them. Tell him you have heard me address them as children of God; and call them to live and to be happy, as children of God.' — I know not, indeed, how John was affected by this reply of Jesus. But I do not hesitate to say, that there is no external evidence of our religion by which I am so strongly impressed with its truth and its excellence, as I am by the manifestation which is here made of it in the spirit and conduct of our Lord and Master.

"The poor have the gospel preached to them." In these words then, taken in their connection, we have a most interesting and affecting expression of the sympathy of Jesus with man. He had come to instruct the ignorant, to give rest to the heavy laden, to heal the broken hearted, to save the lost. His object was human nature, in every condition in which it is to be found; the moral

redemption, exaltation, and highest possible happiness of every individual. With this end incessantly in his view, he felt in the wants and sufferings of man the strongest possible claims upon his interest, his care, his labors. He saw in man, however poor, despised, neglected, a spiritual and an immortal nature; and he honored this nature even in the poorest and the lowest, in its capacities for the highest virtue; for an eternally growing virtue; and for a happiness in virtue which no other possession can bring to it. Neither, however, in his message to John, nor when he said in the synagogue of Nazareth, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach glad tidings to the poor," did he mean to imply that he had brought a religion to the world which was exclusively for the poor; or, that he had brought a distinct gospel for them, from that which he had brought for the rich. But he did mean, that he had brought a religion to the world which was intended to raise, to improve, and thus to bless the lowest, the poorest, and even the most abject of our race; a religion which was intended to reach to the deepest and strongest necessities of every individual, in every exposure and suffering of life. He did mean, that the highest good and the greatest happiness of which human nature is capable, were brought by his preaching within the scope of the poorest, equally as of the richest. He meant that his was a religion of principles and ends, which comprehended at once the greatest good of every human soul; and that the poor were to be blessed through the gospel, as were the rich, by being brought to the piety and virtue of the gospel. There is no other conceivable way by which either the poor or the rich can be blessed by Christianity. Have you then, let me ask, — and the appeal is to those who have lived under all the influences most favorable to the attainment of a Christian character,

and of the richest blessings which Christianity is intended to bring to its believers, — have you then in these blessings your own most precious treasure; a treasure, without which, even with the greatest possible outward possessions, you would feel yourself to be poor and miserable? Is Christianity *to you* that good, compared with which all other good is worthless? Has it done much, very much, to deliver *you* from the darkness and the bondage of sin, and to bring you to the light, and liberty, and consolation, and happiness, of a child of God? Then you will feel that you have no greater responsibility than for these blessings of Christianity. You will feel that nothing is more desirable, than the greatest possible extension of these blessings to all around you; and to all, in proportion to their peculiar need of them. And you will feel that the question of your sympathy with Jesus, in bringing the poor to happiness through his gospel, is a test, and an important test, of your own appreciation of these blessings, of your own gratitude for them, and of your claim even to the name of a disciple of Jesus.

Sympathy with Jesus in the cause of blessing the poor through the gospel; — this is the sentiment, I trust, which has brought us together this evening. We have assembled upon an occasion, to myself, and I doubt not to many who hear me, of extraordinary interest. We are about to engage in the solemn act of separating two ministers of Christ to a department of service, to which no others have in this manner been separated. It is distinctly recognised by us in the design for which we have come together this evening, that it was a specific purpose of our Master and Lord, that his gospel should be preached to the poor; and, to meet this purpose, we are to ordain two of our friends with a special reference to the poor. We mean not to imply by this act, that

there are not those who are poor, as well as those who are rich, in connection with all the congregations in our city; or, that Christianity is not faithfully preached to those who are connected with our different religious societies. But it has been ascertained that there are in our city, and it is equally well known that there are in every large city in Christendom, large numbers, to whom, if Christianity is to be extended, it must be by a ministry which shall be carried from house to house, and from individual to individual. At least, under the present constitution both of society and the churches, there are large numbers who are not, or at best are but partially, to be gathered into our congregations. With these portions of our poor, however, a strong Christian sympathy is felt by the ministers of our churches, and a growing sympathy by the members of their congregations; and could I suppose myself now to be addressing those only who feel this sympathy, I, in my turn, might feel that even in the short appeal I have made to the gratitude you owe, and to the responsibleness you acknowledge, for the blessings which Christianity has brought to yourselves, my duty was discharged. But I am not addressing those only who are alive to a sensibility of all the interests of this occasion. There is skepticism among us, and there is infidelity upon the question, *What can Christianity do for the poor?* and it is even tauntingly varied into the form, *What has Christianity done for the poor?* This question, then, must be met and answered with reference to this skepticism, this infidelity. And so I will attempt to answer it.

Let us, however, in the first place, conceive as clearly and justly as we may of that gospel which Christ preached to the poor. What was it?

I have said that our Lord did not bring, nor did he profess to bring a gospel for the poor distinct from that

which he brought for the rich. But in bringing a religion to the world which was intended for the whole world, for all classes and all generations of men, he did intend that men, in every class, and every condition, should find in his religion the principles and ends which should be to each, and all, for the highest good, and the greatest happiness. He did intend, for example, to meet the deepest necessities and the strongest wants of the poor. He did intend to bring a good, a happiness, within the reach and the possession of the poor, in the attainment of which they should in the best sense of the term be rich, even though beside it they should have nothing. He did intend, that, wherever his gospel should be extended, there the poor should be recognised as they never had been among men, and by men; and that there, also, they should become what they never had been, and what they never could have been, but through his gospel. Is it not so? I refer you to himself, as he is brought before us in the New Testament, and to his preaching for the reply.

I bring Jesus before my mind amidst the crowds by which he was daily surrounded. Of whom were these crowds composed? I see among them the learned, the powerful, the affluent; doctors of the law, and rulers of the synagogue; the teachers and guides of the nation. They were looking for the redemption of Israel; and they were ready to follow any leader who would sanction their judgments of the expected redemption, and give them the preëminence which they felt that they might claim in it. But I see also in these crowds the slave, as well as the master, and the poorest and most despised, as well as the richest and most honored. Here are the lame, the blind, the dumb, and even the outcast leper. Here is the sinner, by whose touch the sanctified Pharisee would have felt himself to be polluted; and here

is disease of every kind, and destitution in every form, in which it could be collected about him. Here were multitudes, to whom the language of sympathy, of interest, of respect, and of decided kindness was almost as an unknown tongue. They were indeed principally Jews, — descendants of Abraham. But there were bondmen — slaves, even among these Jews; and there was the half-loved and half-trusted proselyte, and the thoroughly hated publican, Jew even as he was. The Scribe and the Pharisee, separating themselves from this multitude, would have designated it as the rabble. Yet what was Jesus in the midst of this rabble, and what was this rabble in the view, and in the preaching of Jesus?

I can form no idea of the morally sublime, like that which is excited in my mind by a conception of Jesus in the scene in which he is here brought before us. Here is a divinely commissioned minister from God, and himself a moral representative of God to man. I enter the crowd in which he is. I hear him say of himself, that he is the Son of God; and I see him from hour to hour doing the works, which no one could do, if God were not with him. He opens the eyes of the blind, and unstops the ears of the deaf. He causes the lame man to leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing. He raises the paralytic from his bed, sends the leper away cleansed, by a miracle feeds the hungry thousands, and even calls the dead to life. It was not possible, indeed, that crowds should not have been continually about him. Curiosity, excited by reports of him, and admiration, when his mighty works were seen, must have brought them to him, and have kept them with him. Nor was his personal character less wonderful than were his miracles. In moral purity and dignity he stands alone. There is nothing to be conceived of the holiness of heaven, that is not realized in him. He speaks, and his very enemies are

astonished. "Whence," exclaim they, "hath this man this wisdom!" And even the officers sent to apprehend him return with the reply, "never man spake like this man!" If ever there was greatness in wisdom, in holiness, or in power, to excite awe, it was in Jesus. And yet these crowds not only gather round him; they are not only filled with wonder; they even press upon him. The slave, the beggar, the poorest, the most despised, the most abhorred by others, and he that feels himself to be the greatest of sinners, are attracted to him, can approach, and can address him. Here, it seems to me, is a spectacle for the admiration of angels. Yet this sublime being is himself a poor man. He has no home of his own. He has not where to lay his head, except in the habitation of one of his followers. Under the influence of this scene, I ask myself, what is greatness? What is excellence? What, and where is the chief good of man? And under the influences of this scene, and aided by its associations, I ask, what was that gospel which Jesus preached to the poor?

Jesus speaks to the multitude; and of this multitude he overlooks not an individual. He sees in the poorest, the lowest, the most abject, the most contemned, the image of the invisible and eternal God; the capacities of a nature by which they are allied to beings of an inconceivably higher condition of existence than is the highest in this world; and he addresses himself to these capacities. Here then, let me say, was the principle of the mighty power of Jesus over the mind. I bring myself into the crowd of hearers of the sermon on the Mount. He begins that wonderful discourse with the enunciation of blessings. And who are the blessed, the happy, in the view of Jesus? The poor in spirit, the mourner, the meek, the soul hungering and thirsting after righteousness, the pure in heart, the merciful, the peacemakers, the persecuted for righteous-

ness' sake. And how were they blessed, or to be blessed? How, but through the faith to which he called them in that Father's providence, which, if it clothes the lilies of the field, and feeds the ravens, and disregards not even the falling of a sparrow to the ground, will surely be extended to them, his spiritual and immortal children. How, but through that righteousness, and purity of heart, and holy love, in which they and our race were constituted to find their highest and only enduring happiness. The subjects of which he speaks to this multitude are, indeed, the greatest which can be addressed to the human mind; and in view of them we may be ready to inquire, can such poor and ignorant, especially can such outcasts and despised beings, comprehend the doctrines of the almighty and universal Father; of their own spiritual and immortal nature; of Christian righteousness and Christian repentance; of virtue as the beginning of heaven, and of heaven as the perfection of virtue? But all my difficulties upon this question are dispelled, when I bring these doctrines into association with Jesus, their teacher. Nothing can be more unlike abstractions, than are his teachings. He addresses those whom he feels to be immortals, and whom it is the great object of his ministry to bring to the character and happiness of immortals. It was this feeling, — it was sympathy in Jesus with those whom he addressed, — it was the all-absorbing interest of his own soul in the spiritual and eternal well-being of all, even the lowest of those around him, through which the instructions were made to be full of light, which would otherwise have been but obscurely imparted, and as partially comprehended and felt by his hearers. Nay, more. No teacher ever addressed an assemblage, even of the most respected disciples, with so high a sentiment of respect as was that with which Jesus addressed the humblest mind which had come to him for instruction,

and was willing to receive it. He spared not, indeed, the haughty and scoffing sinner, whatever was that sinner's condition, and whatever his estimation in the eyes of those around him. But in accents of a tenderness equalled only by his own purity, his own holiness, he addresses the offers and invitations of mercy to every convicted and humbled spirit. No sinner has fallen so low, has become so corrupt, and is so cut off from pity and from hope, that hearing and believing he does not feel that he may hope, and find pity and forgiveness with God. The gospel is preached — the glad tidings are proclaimed, that the throne of the almighty Father is alike accessible by each of his children; that the highest homage to this Father is the homage of a humble, a penitent, a submissive, and devoted heart; that in the sight of the Father, the greatest of all, the most honorable and the most to be honored, is he that shall most meekly and faithfully discharge the duties of his condition, be those duties as humble as they may; and that he who has here been the poorest, if he have also been faithful unto death, may look, with all the confidence which God's own assurance can give him, to an inheritance boundless as his desires, and enduring as the government of the Father.

I cannot, forgetting the teacher, dwell upon the doctrine of Jesus, and not feel that if the poor, depressed, degraded beings of our race are to be raised and to be brought to happiness, it must be through this doctrine. But, in truth, we shall have most defective conceptions of that gospel which he preached to the poor, if we look at it apart from the spirit with which he preached it. There is nothing more essential to the religion of Jesus, than is that spirit. I mean that in his sympathy with the poor, his interest in them, his respect for them, his respect for those spiritual natures to which he was speaking, was a power over the heart, far greater than that with which he

gave sight to the blind, and speech to the dumb. "He knew," says the evangelist, "what was in man." And in no circumstance of his life did he more impressively show that he knew what was in man, and what was most needed by the poor in order to raise and bless them, than in the sympathy, the tenderness, the respect which he extended to them. The authority of the Scribes was that of teachers, who felt their own distance from those whom they taught. It was that of teachers, who felt that themselves, and those whom they were forming to be of themselves, were every thing; and that the crowd of the poor, the ignorant, and the low were nothing. The authority of Jesus was intended, and suited, to bring to every one, even the humblest who heard him, the conviction, that they had but to do the will of God, and they would be to himself as a brother, a sister, or a mother. It was the authority of an interest, a love, which made even the lowest to feel, "I may be exalted;" and the poorest, "I may be rich, at least in the treasures of heaven." I am not surprised when I read that "the multitude were *astonished* at his doctrine." The tones of a love like that of Jesus had never before been heard in our world. The multitude had never been treated by any teacher, as was this multitude by him. Oh! would that his gospel had been preached through succeeding ages, with the sympathy, the interest, the affection with which he preached it! Then within a few generations would it have subdued all opposition; and every where have shown itself to be the wisdom of God, and the power of God.

Is it said that Christianity as we see it in association with Jesus, is one thing; and Christianity as it is every day to be seen in the world, is quite another thing? This is true, or never would the question have arisen, what has Christianity done for the poor? Yet I do not fear to

say that it has done much, and more than has by any other means been done for them. I do not mean only, or principally, that it has erected its thousands of hospitals for the diseased, and of alms-houses for the destitute. Far less do I mean, that under its influence legislatures have enacted laws for a compulsory provision, where it might not voluntarily be made, for the support of those who could not support themselves. Nor do I refer to the voluntary associations for the relief of want, and of every kind of want among the poor, which are to be found in every community of Christendom. Nor yet, as the primary and peculiar blessing which it has brought to this class of our fellow beings, would I even refer to that widely extended care for the poor, and bounty to them, which are beyond all comparison a higher good, than would be a ten-fold increase of alms-houses, and poor laws, and voluntary associations for charity. But I refer to the fact, an unspeakably important one, that the poor are at this very day indebted to Christianity for all the interest which is excited for them *as men;* as fellow beings; as beings of a common nature with the most exalted of men, and who have equal natural rights with the most exalted. They owe it to Christianity that they are looked upon as *men*, and not as mere brutes in the shape of men. It was long, strangely long, before this recognition of them even began in the countries, in which our religion obtained an establishment. And it is now any thing but what it should be, and what Christianity would make it. Still it is a fact, that it has redeemed hundreds of thousands from slavery; and in proportion as its spirit has extended, the poor have been made to feel themselves as they never did before, and as they do under no other religion, to be men, and equally regarded by God, as is he who has the greatest possessions. I feel indeed that we have little of which to boast, in view of what Christianity has done for

the classes, although it has done very much for individuals, both of the rich and the poor. We have far more to humble us in view of what it would have done, and of what it has not done, than of triumph in the thought of what it has accomplished. Yet let the blame that it has not accomplished its objects more extensively and more completely fall where it should fall. And where is that? Let me refer you to a few facts upon this subject.

Modern poverty, — poverty, I mean, attended as it now is in England and on much of the continent of Europe, with ignorance and abjectness and debasement, is the growth of ages of a most unchristian, and even anti-christian constitution of society. Through the centuries in which slavery was not only tolerated, but maintained as consistent with Christian right and justice, the humbler classes even of those who were not serfs, or slaves, were left in utter neglect and contempt. Here, then, is a great monitory truth. The rich and the poor felt themselves to be different orders of beings. There was no moral connection between them. Till the eleventh century of the Christian era, not only were the multitude of the common people in England slaves, but it is to the beginning of that century, that we trace the first interposition of authority for emancipation there. Nor was this emancipation, — I mean the emancipation of white slaves in Great Britain, completed till the 15th of George III., in the year 1775, by the act which declared that colliers, who had hitherto in Scotland been bondmen, were free, and on the footing of other servants.* Through this long process, there

* "The mitigation and final extinction of English slavery was a work of gradual and lengthened operation. The first blow the system sustained was in the disuse of the ancient practice of converting prisoners of war into bondmen. The diffusion of Christianity early awakened men to the injustice of a practice which made one man the property of another. Frequently, at the intercession of their

was indeed, among those who thus acquired freedom, as well as among the other poor, a slowly advancing conception of their strength, and their rights. It was not possible that, with the progress of society in its higher departments, there should not have been a stronger action of thought, and therefore some extension of knowledge, among the lower, and the lowest, classes. But till within a very recent date no other knowledge was within the reach of these classes, except that alone which was incidental, and which could not have been withheld from them. No measures were taken for their instruction, or for the improvement of their condition through the improvement of their character. It is to be considered, also, that the slaves of former times, like those of the present, were dependent only upon those called their *owners* for support. They looked not for aid to others; for aid from charity. By their emancipation, therefore, an immense accession was made to the number of those who had no resource for support, except charity or theft. How could it have been then, with all their ignorance of duties, and under all

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confessors, the feudal lords were induced to enfranchise their slaves. In the eleventh century the Pope formally issued a bull for the emancipation of slaves; and in 1102, it was declared in the great council in the nation, held at Westminster, *unlawful for any man to sell slaves openly in the market*, which had before been the common custom of the country." — "In the reign of Charles II., slavery was wholly abolished in England by statute; its attempted abolition in 1526 having proved abortive. So late even as 1775 the colliers in Scotland were bondmen; and in case they left the ground of the farm to which they belonged, and as pertaining to which their services were bought or sold, they were liable to be brought back by summary procedure before a magistrate. The existence of this sort of slavery being deemed irreconcilable with personal freedom, colliers were declared free, and put on the same footing as other servants by the act 15th George III., cap. 28." — Wade's History of the Middle and Working Classes, pp. 9, 10. Second Edition. London. 1834.

the pressure of their necessities, that their freedom should not have been a curse to themselves, and all around them? How could it have been, that a wretchedly abject poverty should not have advanced with the progress of emancipation, accumulating every species of crime in its course? This wretched population for a long time obtained much of its support from the monasteries; and, upon the dissolution of these institutions was of course scattered, and compelled to obtain the means of sustenance wherever and however it could obtain them. Yet while new measures of increasing severity were from time to time taken respecting them, absolutely nothing was done to bring them under Christian instruction and Christian influences. I know of nothing more humiliating, more depressing in the records of human history, than is that series of enactments, by the most intelligent legislature in the world, and by a legislature, every member of which called himself a Christian, through successive ages for the punishment of crime, — the increasing crime growing out of increasing poverty, — yet unrelieved by one provision for the improvement of these poor criminals, through the improvement of their mind or character; or by the expression of any higher respect for their wants and sufferings, than that of legalizing, within certain restrictions, the beggary which it was not possible that any authority should prevent. The act, indeed, of the 43d of Elizabeth, under which the poor have been provided for by law in England for more than two centuries, distinctly recognises, to a certain and an important extent, the claims of the impotent poor; and of the children of the poor, in the cases in which their parents cannot provide employment for them. But it has been the tendency of the whole machinery of society there, to be enlarging the number of these children further and further beyond the capacity of law to provide for them. I say not this

from a feeling of enmity to England. O, no. I owe much to England, and I love the land of our fathers. I know that nobler beings, more philanthropic and Christian spirits, exist not on the earth than there. But when the poverty of Europe is flowing in upon us like a flood, and when it has been ascertained that more than half of our poor have come to us from Europe, it is surely high time that we should inquire, and understand, whence came the degradation which we see connected with this poverty? and, how may we be saved from an overwhelming population of abject, desperate, and reckless poor? The evil, great, difficult, and embarrassing as it already is with us, is not yet one from which we are to turn away with discouragement. But let it be treated by us as it has been treated in the old world, and the only hope of liberty which will be left to our children will be that, for the maintenance of which they must themselves look to the power with which a master, a despot, can control his subjects.

In the ancient statutes of the English parliament there is no deficiency in the recognition of "sturdy rogues," and of "vagrants." But the earliest mention of *beggars* occurs in the year 1376, from which time to the present there has been no lack of legislation respecting them. I am well aware, indeed, how poor and low were the sentiments, even of enlightened men, in those days, on the subject of freedom; nor, even at this day are prevailing sentiments of a much higher character. But we are sufficiently advanced for the inquiry, — what was to have been expected from men, who had been reared in the dependence and debasement of bondage, and who were thrown upon the world for self-support, with no other possession than the miserable raiment which covered them; ignorant alike of letters, or of any useful occupation, or of moral relations and duties; pressed by want,

and still left by each generation of their superiors, in the ignorance in which it found them? When I look upon these poor fellow-beings as they have been, and are, not only am I not surprised at the amount of vice and crime which has been and is found among them; but I am surprised not to find it far greater than it has been, and is. I am surprised, that, with all the lights which history is holding up to us, and with all the admonitions which history and experience are reading to us, we are so slow to perceive, and to feel, that the measures which have been and are still taken, at least to a very great extent, for the security of society against the ravages of ignorant and reckless dependence, have been and are means of perpetuating the very evils they were intended to prevent or to remedy. It seems, indeed, to have been forgotten, that these subjects of legislation, — these sturdy rogues, vagrants, beggars, — were *men;* men of a common nature with those who have legislated concerning them; and that, if they were to be saved from crime, or punished for crime, they were at least to have the means of becoming moral beings, and to be recognised and treated as moral beings. Establish as many hospitals and almshouses as you may; institute what penalties of crime you may; erect prisons, and organize them as you may; let your police be as extensive, and as well appointed as it can be; and let the military force you can bring to bear upon a mob be great enough even to crush that mob; and yet, leave the moral, the spiritual nature uncared for; — leave the mind, the soul, to the ravages of animal desires, propensities, appetites, and passions; — leave the being, who was made for freedom, and whose freedom can yet be a blessing to himself or others only through virtue, ignorant of virtue, and without excitements and aids to virtue; — leave the being, who was made for immortality, and for the immortal service and enjoyment of God, igno-

rant of God, and insensible of his immortality; — leave him to seek and find the satisfaction of his insatiable wants in the objects alone of earth and of sense, because he knows not that he can elsewhere find it; and misery will extend, and crime will accumulate. Whatever may be equivocal in our deductions from human nature and from human history, this great lesson is brought home to us with all the power with which demonstration can enforce it. And yet, what are the measures still proposed, and still relied upon throughout Christendom, on the subjects of poverty and the poor? The revision and improvement of penal codes; new and better systems of prison discipline; and new modifications of old poor law systems. There are no questions, — at least there are few questions, — which are now felt to be of greater importance in England, and by the most intelligent statesmen as well as by the philanthropists of that country, than are those which are connected with poverty and the poor. The future condition of the country is felt to depend on nothing more essentially, than on the wise settlement of these questions. Take a single fact in this connection. I have been assured, that in London only there are thirty thousand children, between the ages of five and fifteen years, who are without a friend to care for them, — almost literally without a home, and who, left in the ignorance and idleness, the moral neglect and moral exposures in which they are now living, will have no choice of a course for subsistence, except that of beggary, or of theft, or of prostitution. And yet the hope of the country, in respect to poverty and the poor, is in a change in the administration of the poor laws, the effect of which it is believed will be to force back the poor upon their own resources.* In

* "We are perfectly aware," say the English commissioners in their report upon the poor laws, "that, *for the diffusion of right*

other words, it is hoped that the able-bodied poor *will* work, when they shall find that they *must* work, or starve; and that, by their rescue from idleness they will be rescued from crime, and the country from the necessity of supporting them. And will this hope be realized? I would say, would to God that it may be! But the whole course of experience seems to me to show the futility of the hope. For what can reasonably be hoped for, where no higher means shall be employed for calling forth a sense of character, — for improving character, through an improvement of the moral nature? I appeal, then, to every one who has looked into the operation of our own poor law system, if it have not ministered to the extension and to the aggravation of poverty among us? I appeal to the intelligent and the patriotic, in view of their hopes for our country, and ask if they feel no alarm at the rapidly increasing numbers of the poor among us? And let the blame, — I repeat it, — of the great and pressing evils of poverty here, and throughout Christendom, fall where it should. It may indeed, and it must, fall

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principles and habits we are to look, not so much to any economic arrangements and regulations, as to the influence of a moral and religious education. But one great advantage of any measure which shall remove or diminish the evils of the present system is, that it will in the same degree remove the obstacles which now impede the progress of instruction, and intercept its results; and will afford a freer scope to the operation of every instrument which may be employed for elevating the intellectual and moral condition of the poorer classes. We have ventured on these few remarks, only for the purpose of recording our conviction, that as soon as a good administration of the poor laws shall have rendered further improvement possible, *the most important duty of the Legislature is to take measures to promote the religious and moral education of the laboring classes.*"

See "Report from his Majesty's Commissioners for inquiring into the Administration and practical Operation of the Poor Laws." p. 362.

upon those who call themselves Christians. But it falls not upon Christianity. It falls not, surely, upon the principles which, however they may have been professed, have yet been disregarded in this great concern, and even violated and outraged. May God help us better to understand our religion, and more faithfully to use it for the purposes for which it was given to us!

The truth then is, and the sooner we learn it the happier it will be with us, that the poor have but to a very limited extent been blessed through the gospel, as it proposes to bless them, because the rich have as yet been so partially blessed through the gospel; and the rich have not been blessed by Christianity as it would have blessed them, because it has yet so partially called forth that sympathy of man with man to which it would excite and bring its believers. In view of the causes which have restrained and are restraining the progress of our religion, I am not at all surprised that its progress has not been greater, or that it has not done more for the world. We are to look for no miraculous interpositions for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ. It is God's will that they who receive the gospel should be his instruments for the extension of the gospel; that Christians should regard their spiritual and immortal interests as infinitely their highest interests; that means and opportunities should be felt to be responsibilities; that under Christianity, every man should look upon every man as his brother; and that destitution, and suffering, and moral exposure should be recognised as grounds of claim for sympathy, and interest, and service for those who shall require it. These are the great principles through which Christianity is to be made the greatest of blessings, at once to the rich and to the poor. In other words, it is through the sympathy of believers in Christ, with Christ, in the objects of his religion, and through the sympathy of man

with man, to which Christianity would bring every individual in all the classes of society. If you would raise human nature where it is depressed, and improve it where it is degraded, you must respect and honor it in those which are its highest capacities, — its capacities of duty and of an ever growing virtue. I hold few doctrines to be more important than this. You can take no more effectual means of degrading and debasing men, than by treating them as degraded and debased beings. Look at society through preceding ages, and say if any better results than have been attained were reasonably to have been anticipated? What but debasement and crime could have been expected from a multitude every where oppressed, and not contemned only when they were able to make themselves feared; receiving no instruction which was suited to raise them as moral beings, and surrounded by all possible excitements to crime? And where was responsibility for the debasement, the crime of this multitude, but in those who, if they had carried out towards these poor fellow-beings even a few of the simplest principles of the gospel of Christ, would thus have done more for themselves, and for the salvation and happiness of the poor, than the legislation of thousands of centuries could have accomplished? Or, where lies the guilt of much of the debasement and crime, which are even now exciting our own alarm in the multitude? Where, but in the same spirit in ourselves, by which these evils have been so long perpetuated, and have been transmitted to us?

Is it said that far more is now done among us, than was ever before done, both for the temporal and spiritual well-being of the poor? It is true; and the result has been, a great improvement in the character and condition of many among them. Still public sentiment is low, compared with what it should be, on this subject; and many and powerful are the agencies which are in opera-

tion, for the extension of depravity in all its grossness, and with it, of pauperism and misery. Look at the facilities and excitements to intemperance, and to corruption in all its forms, which are every where in the way of the seaman, of the laborer, and even of the children of the poor. See where lies the power of the skeptic upon the question, What can Christianity do for the poor? He is forced to acknowledge, that if our religion should be extended, in all its natural influences, to those who have fallen into sin, and if its preventive power should be applied to those who are just entering upon the way to destruction, it would save them all. And yet he can turn upon us with the scoff, 'your proposed redemption is an abstraction. It is beautiful in theory; but it is a mere theory; an empty abstraction.' I confess that my heart would die within me when I hear this language, if my hope for my fellow-beings were resting upon the faith with which our religion is but too generally received. 'The redemption of men from sin, — from the sins which are producing debasement and misery, a mere theory, — an empty abstraction!' Then I say, Christianity is not a revelation from God; and there is, indeed, no hope of any thing better for our race than has already been. Admit the premises of the skeptic, and you must give up your religion as a fiction; and its hopes as an illusion, — a dream. Do you shrink, Christian, from this fair inference? Admit, then, that the gospel exerts not its preventive and redeeming power, because we, the appointed instruments through whom this power is to be made effectual, are unfaithful to the duties towards those around and below us in condition, to which the gospel calls us. Looking to the poor only, how blessed, I ask, would be the idle, the improvident, the low and gross, the intemperate and dishonest, if only recovered from those sins which are the immediate causes of their want and degradation? Here then is my

first answer to the question, what can Christianity do for the poor? I say it can, — and if it shall raise us who are not poor to the character to which it would form us, — if it shall inspire us, who call ourselves disciples, with the love for our fellow-beings, and the sympathy with them, which our Master felt, — it *will* accomplish this redemption. It has thus redeemed many from the lowest depths of sin. It has thus saved many from falling into the lowest depths of sin, who, by one step further in transgression, might have been thought irrecoverably lost. And it has thus blessed thousands, as they could have been blessed by no other change of condition in this world. Let us then do what we may, — and especially by our own growth in the spirit of the gospel, — that this redemption may be extended as our Lord meant that it should be; and then, with an emphasis and an extent of application with which it has never yet been addressed to them, may we avail ourselves of the benediction of Jesus, and say, "blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven!"

But not only does our religion propose our redemption, and the redemption of all, from gross sin and from every sin. This is indeed essential to the happiness it would communicate. But that happiness itself is to be found only in the piety, the virtue, the character to which it would exalt all and every individual. The highest maxim of the most philanthropic statesman is, the greatest good of the greatest number. Human legislation can look no further. The characteristic rule and object of Christianity is, the greatest good of every individual. And its means are competent to its end. It knows, indeed, no greater good than the character it would form; and it has no greater blessing to confer, either in time or in eternity, than the happiness this character will bring to its possessor. To this character it would form, and with this

happiness it would bless, each one of the poor, and of the poorest, equally as of the rich and the richest. See what was the judgment which Jesus formed of character, and the estimate which he formed of virtue, when sitting over against the temple and seeing many that were rich casting in much from their abundance into the treasury, he saw also a poor widow cast in two mites, which make a farthing; "Verily I say unto you, that poor widow hath cast more in, than all they that have cast into the treasury."

Here, however, I thank God, I can speak the language not of conjecture, nor of belief, but of knowledge. A few days will complete eight years since I entered upon the service, to which my young friends are this evening to be ordained. And I say not that I have seen all the fruits of this ministry which I could devoutly wish to have seen of it. But I have seen fruits of it, which I have felt would have been cheaply purchased at the cost of my life in this world. Many, however, of the most interesting and important results of this service are of a kind to excite but little observation. To many who had not known a Christian friend, who were struggling alone with their trials, and were sinking under their burdens, because they knew not where to look for aid in sustaining them, all the aids and blessings of a Christian friendship may be extended; many may be saved from falling into sin, or rescued when yet they have taken but a few steps in the way of transgression; and many may be encouraged and strengthened in well-doing, who would otherwise have sunk under feebleness and discouragement; and yet, in all this there may be nothing to call forth the exclamations, lo, here! or lo, there! Nay, amidst all the events which are occurring in our world, and which are exciting our strongest interest, the Omniscient and Eternal Mind may see nothing more excellent, nothing which

He more approves and loves, than the simple, quiet, unobtrusive piety and virtue of some poor and scarcely known sufferer among us; — a human soul striving to do faithfully what it feels that it should do; patiently enduring what it is called to bear; watchful against sin as the greatest of evils; and supremely desiring and endeavouring to be ready, whenever called, to render its account. I would not, however, that your sympathy with this service should rest upon the good already attained in it. It is the cause of God and of Christ in the gospel; and its claims are the claims of human nature. As far as it has gone, the experiment has indeed been a successful one. It has been to large numbers an unspeakable blessing. Let ministers therefore be appointed to it, who will give to it their hearts and their lives, and far more abundant fruits than have yet been obtained will reward their toil. I am not more sure of my existence, than I am of the competency of Christianity to meet and satisfy the deepest and strongest wants of man; to remedy the evils, and to raise the character of society, as these ends can be accomplished by no other means. Let a poor individual, or let a poor family be brought under Christian influences, be formed to the piety and virtue to which Christianity would form them, and society has no greater treasure than this individual, or this family. This is my second reply to the question, what can Christianity do for the poor? It can form even in the poorest the best character, and it can give even to the poorest the best happiness, both of earth and of heaven.

I have said that poverty, in the extent of abjectness and of degradation in which it is to be seen in England, and over much of Europe, is in no small degree a result of the advancement of freedom there, unattended by the measures and aids by which alone that freedom could have been made a blessing, either to the emancipated slave or to society.

Nor can I look, to any considerable extent, for any better result from the more recent emancipation of the colored slaves of the West Indies, if more shall not be done than has yet been done for their Christian instruction and salvation. Had Christianity, however, from the beginning been acted out by those who have professed to receive it, not only would the freedom of the slave have been obtained as widely as the gospel was extended, and not only would the slave have been made by the gospel, in the highest sense, worthy of freedom; but then, at this day, and through the long ages of the traffic of Christians in human flesh, there could have been no slavery in Christendom. Give free scope to Christianity in a community and in a country, and not only can there be no slavery there, but there will be a strength of virtue, an elevation and an energy of character, even through the humblest and most suffering classes, which will be infinitely above all others the safeguards of freedom and of happiness. Christianity would carry on every individual, in his condition, be it what it may, and according to his capacities, to the highest perfection of his spiritual nature. This is its great design, and distinguishing excellence. In all that constitutes excellence, and obtains approbation in the sight of God, it would make the poorest equal with the richest, and the servant equal with his master; for it brings all to one judgment-seat, at which there will be no distinction, except of them that have served God, and of them that have served him not. Oh! would that this judgment-seat might be, as it never has been, a present and a near reality to our souls! Then, in comparison, how poor would be all those distinctions of outward condition, which must terminate at the grave! Then should we rightly estimate the happiness which Christianity can give to the poor, because we should know and feel, that it is the happiness which is infinitely the most important

for ourselves. And then, whatever might be our worldly possessions, we should feel ourselves in the best sense to be rich, only when we have that treasure which is to be possessed in common with the poorest, whose hope and whose heart are in heaven.

I know to what imputations I may expose myself, but still I fear not to say, that our world has but too long been under the delusion, that the prosperity, the greatness, the glory and strength of nations lie in their wealth, their science, and their progress in the arts by which the elegancies and conveniencies of life may be multiplied and perfected. But is it so? What, indeed, has been this prosperity, this greatness, this glory and happiness, but the advancement of the few by means of the depression of the many? I might appeal to the records of history; to the dying testimony of the nations, the fame of whose greatness was once the terror of the world. But I will only ask you to look at the world, — at the nations of Christendom, — as they are at this very day. No American who loves his country, — the principles of its government, — its free institutions, and who feels, as every American should feel, that this government and these institutions are as yet but experiments, — experiments of the capacity of the multitude for self-direction and self-government; no American who so views his country, and who loves as he should love it, can travel over Europe and not most painfully feel at every step of his way, how direct and inevitable are the tendencies of the whole constitution of society there, with all its advancement in the arts, in science and in wealth, to the production and perpetuation of the great classes, every where to be found there, not only of the poor and abject, but of the lawless and the desperate. So rapid within the last forty years has been the progress of the arts, especially in England, that even miracles could have done but little more for

them. And not only so, science has scarcely looked to any ministry, but that of developing new resources, or of contriving new instruments for the production of wealth, in all the kinds and forms in which it can be possessed or desired. Almost beyond the dream of the alchymist is the treasure which has been so obtained. Yet what is the security, the happiness, of Europe? Even in England, in its government the freest in the old world; in science and the arts second to no country upon the globe; and in wealth, notwithstanding its debt of eight hundred millions of pounds sterling, still able to give to the ministers of its crown even greater revenues than some of the neighbouring nations can give to their sovereigns; even in England, great as has been its progress in political reform, and certain as seems to be its continued progress; the freedom of its vast multitudes, — of its humbler classes of operatives, and of its poor, — is any thing but a reality. Take away the host of its police and its soldiery, and the wealth of the kingdom could not purchase the security of London for a week. In passing over that beautiful country, the traveller, having heard of the depression of the lower classes there, may indeed become incredulous upon this subject; and may ask, where are those ravenous and wretched beings, for whose support eight millions of pounds are assessed in taxes, and as many millions are annually expended in private charity? The answer is, you see them not, because they are kept in the back ground by a power which is effectual for keeping them there; or, not a few may be near you, and you may not see them, because all your thought and interest are kept in constant excitement by the displays of wealth and greatness which are every where soliciting your observation. Yet the truth is, that in England, unequalled in its resources and its productions, there is an extent of ignorance, of wretched poverty, and of moral debasement,

which makes its police and its military power as essential as its laws. Look into Ireland, and you find there a still more widely extended and dreadful poverty, with a proportionate ignorance and debasement, which are at once considered as justifying a proclamation of martial law, and which yet even martial law can but partially restrain from outbreaks, and every species of violence. And pass over to the continent. If you shall travel there with feelings worthy of a man, — with one sentiment of Christian sympathy with human rights and human sufferings alive in your heart, you will yourself feel, with pity, shame and indignation, the oppression of the military safeguards which will every where encompass you. You will every where feel yourself to be travelling through a country of enemies, and not of friends. You will feel that the multitude are regarded, not as men, but as creatures to be kept in subjection only by a power, which at its will can scatter or destroy them. I could not even for a day breathe the air of Europe, and feel myself amidst the descendants of long gone centuries there, amidst all the accumulated wealth, and luxury, and beauty, and magnificence of its departed generations, and not feel at the same time how distinct, and how contradictory may be the terms, — national prosperity, and national happiness. Wealth has, indeed, through the last half century increased beyond all comparison with its increase in former times. But so also has poverty. Or rather I should say, so also has the number increased of those, who feel that they have a right to support by some means, and who have themselves no means for their own support. There is nothing conceivable in destitution, in abjectness, which does not force itself upon your notice there. Nor is there any thing to be learned there, in regard to the means of raising and improving the humbler classes, — with the exception of the school system of Prussia, — but lessons of solemn and affecting admonition.

I could not, therefore, be, as I have recently been, in Europe, and not every where ask myself, where are my own countrymen looking for their greatness, their strength, their national security and happiness? Is it in new resources and means of wealth? Is it in a climate and a sky, which will supply them with all that the earth can give to its inhabitants? Or is it in a government which recognises every subject of it who pays even the smallest tax as one of the sovereign people? Alas! Let this sovereign people be with us — let our multitude become what the multitude is in the old world, — and so it will be if the multitude shall be treated here as it has been treated there, — and your union is a bubble, and your freedom a jest. Let our multitude become what the multitude is in the old world, and you will gladly exchange the dominion of this multitude, for the dominion, however unrestrained, of any singleheaded sovereign. Your immense wealth and your immense resources, let them be tenfold what they are, will then be required for the maintenance of an immense police, and an immense standing army. The progress of time is not more certain than is this connection of moral cause and effect. How then is our country to be saved from the desolating dominion of a lawless multitude? How, but by making this multitude competent to the exercise of the sovereignty, with which our constitutions of government have entrusted them? How, but by securing to this multitude that share in the national happiness, in which they will feel that they have a stake to be brought into jeopardy, by any hazard with which your free institutions may be threatened? This, and this only, under God, is the principle, on which our republic can rest in security. The multitude, and the whole multitude, are to be respected and treated as *men*. Are they sunk in degradation? Every means must be applied to raise them from it. Are their children tending,

and even hastening to similar degradation? They must by every means be saved from it. Here is the great lesson which the whole world is conspiring to teach us, at once in its history, and in its immediate condition. The greatness of our republic can be maintained and advanced only by advancing the virtue, and thus the happiness, of its humblest equally as of its highest classes. Is this impracticable? No. If there be truth in Christianity, even the virtue of the poor, fostered and cherished as it should be, may be to us for strength, when no other resource shall be left to us for salvation.

The great cities of the world have hitherto been the centres of the corruption of nations; and they must continue to be so, while they shall be under the influence of the causes which have produced this corruption. They have been, and are, the centres of the talent, the enterprise, and the wealth of nations; the centres of attraction at once to the capital and skill, which can give employment to labor; and therefore to the laborer, who has no capital by which to obtain the means of subsistence, except that physical strength, or shrewdness, or other capacity, which he must carry to a market in which a demand may be found for it. There art is to be seen, striving under all the impulse which want and rivalry can give to it; and there trade and commerce are struggling under all the ever changing excitements, which universal and ceaseless competition can impart to knowledge and industry, to hope and to fear. Of course, therefore, cities are the centres to which tend the most active elements, of which individual and national character are formed. They gather the idle and the busy, the rich and the poor, and those who have the spirit of martyrdom in the cause of virtue, as well as the most lawless and desperate of our kind. They have been, and are, nurseries, hot-beds in which all that is good and evil in the individual, and in the

multitude, is forced to its most rapid growth, and made to produce its fullest and most abundant fruits. But was it God's design that the arts, and that trade and commerce, should be instruments of human corruption, and misery, and ruin? I do not believe it. On the other hand, I believe, and doubt not, that cities were intended to be, and that they may be, to nations, what the heart and lungs are to a healthy human body. I believe that they were intended to be, and that they may be, instruments in God's providence for sending into the various departments, and to the extremities of countries, the invigorating influences of the purest virtue. But, that this divine intention may be accomplished, it is God's will that means should be employed, which are suited to the the end, and which are commensurate with the greatness of the end. And have such means ever been brought to bear upon the large cities of Christendom? Never. On the contrary, they have been left with a most inadequate provision for the religious and moral instruction of a large proportion of their inhabitants; while at the same time every temptation and facility to vice and crime have been permitted to increase, and to extend, almost unchecked, except when crime has become so outrageous as to set all law at defiance. Nay, crime itself, or rather the acknowledged causes of crime and misery, have been licensed, and sanctioned by law; with limitations, indeed, within which government has hoped to be able to control them. There is no mystery, then, upon the question of the causes of the overwhelming corruption of cities. The laws of moral cause and effect, under the circumstances of the case, must have been violated to an indefinite extent, to have prevented this corruption. And are not the means of remedy, and of prevention, as obvious as are the causes of the evil? Some of these causes are within the reach of government; while for the remedy

and prevention of others we can look only to purely moral agencies. Government, however, will never run before public demand in efforts to arrest, or to repress them. Nor can I look with confidence to any great moral improvement, except through a strong public sentiment, which is alive to the dangers which threaten the public happiness, and as strong a feeling of individual responsibility in regard to the means of averting them.

This public sentiment in the cause of the moral improvement and well-being of our city is, I thank God, extending and strengthening among us. A greatly important stage in moral reform has been attained here, as elsewhere, by the institution of our Sunday Schools, in which great numbers are trained to religion and virtue, who would otherwise never have received religious instruction. These, and our Temperance associations, will save multitudes from want, and vice, and crime. Our Common Schools, but for our sectarian jealousies, might minister, as they never have ministered, to the highest order of moral instruction. Our House of Reformation is the most honorable to our city of all our municipal institutions; and if extended, as it probably will be, and supplied with inmates, and directed as it should be, may save hundreds and thousands from our prisons. And we look with grateful confidence to our Farm School to meet moral demands for the young, which are beyond the reach of direct legislation. The pulpit has its circles, and they are large, in which its influence, however short of the desires of those who minister in them, is yet so great, that, should it even be lost to us for a few short months, it would gladly be regained even at a hundred fold the cost at which it is now maintained. The number is however large of those, who are not within the scope of our pulpits; and for these the ministry at large has been instituted. Much

may be done, and we believe that much has been done, by the personal efforts of ministers in this service. But sanctioned as the service now is by public sentiment, and aided by the coöperation of those who have associated to sustain it, we look with gratitude and assurance to its increasing success. This ministry has been long enough in operation, to put its usefulness to the test; and it has sufficiently commended itself to public favor, to obtain the patronage, which, I trust, will secure its permanency. May God grant that our young friends, this evening to be ordained to this important and interesting office, may be among the favored and happy instruments of saving and blessing thousands among us; and of raising this city of refuge to our pilgrim fathers, far nearer than it has ever yet been raised, to the character of a city of Christians!

I hope for far better manifestations than have yet been made of the power of our religion. I hope for them through the interest which its believers are to feel in the cause of a higher and better manifestation of it in themselves. I hope for it also from the increasing sympathy of Christians with their suffering fellow-beings. And, allow me to say, I hope for it through the increased efficiency of the ministry at large, aided as that ministry will be by the active coöperation of the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches. I trust that this Fraternity is not to be a mere ideal existence. I trust that its vital principle is the sentiment of Christian brotherhood with man; and that under this sentiment, a wider connection is to be formed than has yet obtained among us, between the more and the less favored classes of society. He is but a fanatic who would attempt to equalize happiness, by equalizing conditions among men; for as well might he attempt to equalize intellect, or physical strength. Yet happiness may be equalized and advanced as it never yet has been. Let the poor, who cannot provide for their

own necessities, be the objects of Christian interest, respect, and kindness; — let the young, as widely as possible, be saved from vice and crime, and reared to virtue and usefulness; — let religious instruction, encouragement and aid be dispensed from house to house, to those to whom it may in this manner only be extended; — and let Christian principles be carried into all the intercourse and transactions of the employer and the employed; and there will be a closer and stronger union of interests between the classes of society, and a higher happiness in each of them, than would result from any equalization of their mere outward conditions. The condition of many of our poor, and of some highly respectable in character, is indeed pitiable. The rents which they are obliged to pay are often exorbitant; while comfort is not only unattainable, but serious illness is incurred by the untenantable state of the apartments in which they live. Most gladly would I therefore in this respect excite a demand for an improvement of their condition; and often have I wished that the office could be created of a supervisor of houses, without whose approbation of a tenement it could not even be offered for rent. But my hope of improvement in the condition of the poor rests wholly on an improvement of character among them. Attempt to improve character mainly by an improvement of condition, and you will frustrate your own purpose by the very means by which you seek its accomplishment. You will but extend a willingness to be dependent by all which you shall do to raise to independence. Improve character, and where there is any ability for self-support, improvement in condition will be a sure result. It will also be a result which will survive your labors for it. Improve character, and you make an individual, or a family, to be the instrument of his, or their own salvation and advancement. This is the dictate of Christianity; and

wisely regarded, will reach, and remedy, and prevent innumerable evils, to which legislation can never be extended. This is the great object, as far as respects society, of the ministry at large. In the faith of the gospel, and in sympathy with Jesus, we will do what we may to carry to the poor, and to the poorest, all the blessings of our religion. We will do what we may to learn, and to make known the causes, the remedy, and the prevention of pauperism and of crime. We will do what we may to bring the classes of society into a Christian union with each other. And we will hold ourselves in readiness for any, and every call of service, in the department of society in which we minister. I am sure that my colleagues have brought their best affections, their souls to the work. I know that God has blessed it. And if you and we shall be faithful to our high objects, I am sure that our Father will never withhold from us his blessing.

CHARGE.

My Friends,

You have now been set apart to the Christian ministry according to the rites of the congregational church. A principal design of these is to impress you with the importance and responsibleness of your office. That this impression may be strengthened, and that the duties now imposed on you may be brought distinctly to your minds, I have been appointed by the council, here convened, to deliver to you the usual Charge. From the various topics, which naturally occur to me on this occasion, I can select but a few. For full instruction in your sacred calling, I refer you to the scriptures, to the example of Christ, the first and only perfect teacher of his religion, to the labors and sufferings of the apostles, and to the precepts relating to the ministry scattered through their writings. These are able "to furnish you unto every good work, and to make you wise unto salvation."

Preaching and private intercourse with the poor are henceforth to be the labors of your lives. First, you are to preach; and in performing this office, let me exhort you to the scrupulous observance of a plain but often neglected precept. It is this, Reverence Truth. Preach what approves itself clearly to your own minds as true, and preach nothing else. Teach nothing because others teach it. Inculcate nothing about which you have doubts, because expected to inculcate it. Speak from no human

master, from no human creed. Speak from your own calm convictions, and from nothing else. Do not use stronger language than your own minds warrant, for the sake of making greater impression. Do not seek the reputation of eloquence, by assuming a bold, confident tone, which exceeds your private belief. Exaggerate nothing. Paint nothing beyond the life. Be true, the hardest lesson to the minister. Preach nothing, however gratifying to the imagination or the heart, which cannot stand the scrutiny of the deliberate judgment. Distort no truth for the sake of effect. Never hope to make the sword of the spirit more powerful by any human alloy. I have said, beware of exaggeration. Beware also of the opposite vice of softening down, diluting, obscuring the truth, till its power and pungency are gone, in order to accommodate it to the prejudices and passions of men. No man is fit to preach, who is not ready to be a martyr to truth. We indeed recommend to you prudence; but the great office of prudence is not to disfigure or conceal the truth, but to secure it against misapprehension, and to place it before men's minds in the light which will probably gain for it the readiest reception. Be prudent for the truth's sake, not for your own sake, not for the sake of popularity, not from weakness or timidity. Be cautious lest you be over cautious. Fear to stifle any great truth. Let your preaching be the frank expression of the workings and convictions of your own minds. There is a peculiar freshness, charm, energy, in perfect sincerity. The preaching which manifests a profound reverence for truth, which is seen and felt to spring from an inward fountain, which reveals the real and whole mind of the speaker, wins confidence and works conviction, far more than the most vehement outpourings of imagination and passion.

I have said, preach what approves itself to your own minds as true, and nothing else. I now say, preach it in your own style. Give it forth in the form to which your own minds prompt you. Be not imitators. Be not anxious to wield other men's weapons. Do not think that the mode of preaching, which is effectual in another, will therefore succeed in you. You surely would not mimic his tones, because they penetrate his hearers. Look at subjects with your own eyes. Utter them in your own words. Be yourselves. Be natural. There is no other road to the human heart.

Would you be increasingly useful? Then be just to your own minds. Let them act freely. Form yourselves from within more than from without. You ought indeed to seek benefit by hearing other preachers; but be benefited through sympathy, and by catching from them generous impulses, and not by making them models. So you must read what others have written; but read, that the action of other minds may awaken your own intellectual activity, and not be a substitute for it. Listen in the first place to the whispers of truth in your own souls, and prize them more than the teachings of your fellow-creatures. Whenever you catch a new glimpse of God's character, of human nature, of human perfection, of life, of futurity, of the Christian spirit; — whenever a familiar truth rises before you in a new aspect; whenever a new principle dawns on you from a number of facts, which had before lain without connection in your minds; whenever a sentence in a human work, or a text of scripture reveals to you, as by a flash, some depth in your own souls, or scatters suddenly the mist which had before hung over some important doctrine; whenever a new light of this kind gleams on you, prize it more than volumes or libraries. Feel that a higher teacher than man has approached you. Pray to the Father of lights, that

this new ray may brighten within you. It is by this welcome to truth, springing up in our own souls, that we are to grow in energy of thought and feeling; and growth is the great condition of increasing usefulness. We charge you then to be just and generous to your own minds. Cherish every divine inspiration. Be no man's slaves. Seek truth for yourselves. Speak it from yourselves. Speak it in your own natural tones. You of course desire to avoid the greatest of all defects in a preacher, that of being tame and dull; and your security from this is to be found, not in starts and exclamations, not in noise and gesture, not in the common-places of passion, but in keeping your minds and hearts in free and powerful action. This inward life will give life to style and delivery, and nothing else will. This is the only secret of eloquence. Eloquence is not a trick of words. It is the utterance of great truths, so clearly discerned, so deeply felt, so bright, so burning, that they cannot be confined, that they create for themselves a style and manner, which carry them far into other souls; and of this eloquence there is but one fount, and that is inward life, force of thought, force of feeling.

Perhaps it may be said, that these remarks apply little to ministers of the poor; that the poor are as children; and that little spiritual energy is required for their instruction. We charge you, my friends, to beware of this common error. Do not dishonor your high calling by supposing it to require little force of thought and feeling. The poor are generally ignorant, but in some respects they are better critics than the rich, and make greater demands on their teachers. A congregation of the more affluent and educated can be satisfied with proprieties of style and manner, can be held together by local attachment, by the elegance or fashionableness of the edifice in which it worships, or by the strong bonds of a creed

or a sect. The poor care for none of these things. Proprieties of style and manner, local feeling, fashion, show, or sectarian zeal are no attractions to them. They can only be brought and held together by a preaching which fastens their attention, or pierces their consciences, or moves their hearts. They are no critics of words, but they know when they are touched or roused, and by this test, a far truer one than you find in fastidious congregations, they judge the minister, and determine whether to follow or forsake him. The duty of preaching to the poor is accordingly a difficult one. Their minister has much to learn, and, what is harder, much to forget. He must forget the modes of address under which he was himself educated. He is to speak to those who cannot find a meaning in the vague language, which he has generally heard from the pulpit. He must find a new tongue. He must reach the understanding through the imagination and the heart. He must look not upon his notes, but into the eyes of his hearers. He must appeal to the simple, universal principles of human nature. There must be a directness, freedom, earnestness of manner, which are not required in the church of more refined worshippers. To accomplish all this, books will do him little good. His best study is the poor man's narrow room. His best teacher is a keen observation of the workings of the poor man's heart, of his passions, perils, and spiritual wants. We charge you to beware of aiming to resemble ministers in other situations. You must invent modes of action for yourselves. You must make a new path. Cultivate by perpetual practice the power of extemporaneous address. Take your texts, as your Master did, from scenes, events, objects which are pressing on the notice of your hearers. Find your way to their minds and hearts. Be any thing but formal and mechanical. Better forsake your ministry, than make it a monotonous repetition of the common modes of teaching and action.

But preaching is not your whole or chief work. Private intercourse is to you a more important instrument than the pulpit. You must not wait for the poor in the church. Go to them in their houses. Go where no other will go. Let no squalidness, or misery, or crime repel you. Seek the friendless, the forsaken, the desponding, the lost. Penetrate the depths of poverty, the haunts of intemperance, the strong holds of sin. Feel an attraction in what others shun, in the bleak room open to the winter's wind, in the wasted form, and the haggard countenance, in the very degradation of your race. Go where suffering and guilt summon you; and what weapon shall you take with you for this contest with physical and moral evil? You will be told to arm yourselves with caution, to beware of deception, to take the shield of prudence, and to put on the breast-plate of distrust; and this lesson is indeed important; but prudence and caution are only defensive armor. They will be security to yourselves; they give no power over misery, poverty, and vice. That power is to be found in a higher principle, and take heed lest this be quenched by that distrust in which you will be so plentifully instructed. The only power to oppose to evil is Love, strong, enduring love, a benevolence which no crime or wretchedness can conquer, and which therefore can conquer all. Miserable indeed will be your office, if this spirit do not possess you, if a deep sympathy with your suffering fellow-creatures do not compel you, as it were, to seek their abodes, and do not identify you with them. Nothing but Christ's spirit, that which carried him to his cross, can carry you through your work. Go then with his love; and it will be mightier than the sword of the magistrate, or the armies of monarchs, to conquer evil. It will touch the heart which has hardened itself against all other influences. It will pierce the conscience,

which is impregnable against the most vehement rebuke. It will say to the reckless transgressor in the only language he can understand, that he is not an outcast from his race; and it will reveal to the desponding sufferer a love higher than your own, and bring back his lost faith in God. Love gives a new tongue, the only one which all men can comprehend. But by this, I mean something more than the common kindness of the world. I mean the spirit of Christ and his apostles, a love not born of the earth, but which came from heaven in the person of the Saviour, and is only to be nourished by communion with heaven. Seek it as your chief power. Guard it against the contagion of the spirit of this world. Cherish it by meditation and prayer, by intimacy with Christ and his true disciples, and by perpetual exercise in your intercourse with the poor.

You must love the poor; you must also respect them; and in truth, respect is the very soul of the love which I have enjoined. Honor the poor man. Let not his poverty for a moment hide you from his participation of your own nature and of the divine image. Never let the man be lost in the beggar. If you have not power to penetrate to the spirit within him, and to reverence that divine principle more than all outward magificence, you are unfit for your office. If there seem to you exaggeration, or a false sentimentality, in the language which pronounces the soul of one poor man worth more than the wealth of worlds, or than all material nature, then you want the spirit of your function and cannot lay it aside too soon. Go to the poor to awaken in them the consciousness of their relation to God, and of their immortality. Do not go as the representatives of the richer classes, to keep them in order; but go in the name of Christians, to make them partakers of the highest distinctions and blessings in which any of us rejoice. Carry to them the gospel, not for purposes of

worldly policy, but as a life-giving truth, imparted by God to lift them above all worldly greatness, to subject them to a nobler law than that of the state, to make them citizens of heaven. Present religion to them in a generous form. Carry to them the very truths you would bear to the most prosperous and enlightened. Stir up the poor man to be active for his own improvement, and teach him that the power of improvement is communicated to him as liberally as to his prosperous neighbour. Because he is poor, do not think that he is put into your hands as a passive material, to be shaped at your pleasure. Remember that he is as free as yourselves, and can only be carried forward by a spring of improvement in his own soul. The work of his salvation you cannot do for him. Awaken him to strive, watch, and pray for himself. Do not depress him. Do not through a false sympathy speak discouragingly of his condition. Show him that in his poverty he still has God's best gifts, — an immortal soul, and the means of its redemption and glory. Show him how much can be done for human nature in the humblest lot. Teach him that his condition has all the elements of virtue and of the only durable happiness, that suffering may be the occasion and incitement of fervent prayer, filial trust, and fervent fortitude, that the dews of God's spirit descend alike on rich and poor, that every grace may strike root in the soil of penury and may gain strength from life's storms, that like the poor widow in the gospel he can even give more generously, can be more charitable in the sight of God, than the richest of his race, and that even greatness is within his reach, for greatness lies not in what is outwardly done, but in strength of love and holy purpose put forth under sore temptation. Beware of depressing or degrading the poor, by giving them a low form of religion, or low views of their lot. Christ has pronounced blessings on them, and help them to put faith in his life-giving words.

There is one particular on which I cannot forbear speaking. Would you promote the present as well as future happiness of the poor? Then labor much, let it be a leading aim, to cherish among them the domestic and benevolent affections. Whoever knows the poor must know, how greatly the aspect of their abodes would be changed, and what a large proportion of their sufferings would be removed, by the substitution of a true love for selfishness, passion, and envy, for unkind words and unkind deeds. Open within them the fountain of kindness. Urge on them Christianity as a spring of disinterested and tender affection. Teach the poor, that we who are prosperous find our chief earthly happiness in our domestic and other social bonds, and not in wealth; and that without love magnificence is a vain show, and the palace embosoms less peace than many a hovel. I insist on this, because it is the common doctrine of the day, that the poor are to be raised by being taught to save, to hoard, to economise their scanty earnings. By all means teach prudence, but do not make the poor anxious, selfish, sordid. Teach prudence; but still more teach love; and so doing you will best teach economy. Inspire the poor with strong and tender affections towards their families and fellow-creatures, and they will deny themselves and practise thrift with a cheerfulness and fidelity, not often learned from the maxims of worldly wisdom.

I must not enlarge more on particular duties. In general, I would say to you, Honor your work. Think of it reverently. I use no exaggeration, when I give it a place among the most important labors of the times; for it bears on the very evil from which the social state has most to fear. We are accustomed to speak of the improvement of society; but its progress has been attended with one disastrous circumstance, which at times almost makes

us doubt, whether the good has not been too dearly bought. I refer to the fact, that the elevation of one part of the community has been accompanied with the depression of another. Society has not gone forward as a whole. By the side of splendid dwellings you descry the abodes of squalid poverty, and within the city walls, which enclose the educated and refined, you may meet a half civilized horde, given up to deeper degradation than the inhabitants of the wilderness. In England, the country advanced above all others in agriculture, manufactures, refinement, and literary institutions, are miserable multitudes, degraded by dependence, uninstructed even in the being of a God, and dying of want before their time; and such is the tendency of modern civilization through the world. Society is not only disfigured but endangered by the poverty, and ignorance, and vice of a multitude of its members; and its security and happiness demand nothing so imperiously, as that this wretched mass should be enlightened, elevated, redeemed. Here is the chief sphere for philanthropy. Inequalities of property must indeed exist. But can it be necessary, that multitudes of human beings should writhe under wants and hardships, which palsy and almost extinguish their spiritual and moral power? This greatest social evil is beginning to arrest the attention of the statesman, as well as of the philanthropist and Christian. A louder and louder cry is beginning to break forth through the civilized world for a social reform, which shall reach the most depressed ranks of the community. I see, and rejoice to see in your office, my friends, a sign of this new movement, an earnest of this grand and holy revolution. I see in it a recognition of the right of every human being to the means of spiritual developement, of moral and intellectual life. This is the most sacred right of humanity. Blessed are our eyes which see the day of its recognition.

Feel, then, that you are consecrated to the greatest work of your age; and feel that you will be sustained in it by the prayers and zeal of our churches and their pastors. If indeed *your* ministry for the poor should be suffered to decline and fail, it would be a melancholy proof that *our* ministry for the rich is of little avail. If in this age, when the improvement of society is the theme even of the unbeliever, if, with every help from the spirit of the times, we, the pastors of these churches, cannot awaken in them a sensibility to the intellectual and moral wants of multitudes around them, cannot carry home to their consciences and hearts the duty of raising up their depressed fellow-creatures, of imparting Christian light, strength, and comfort to the ignorant and poor, then it is time that we should give up our pulpits to others, who will better understand and inculcate the spirit of Christ and his apostles. It is time, that our lips should be closed, if we can do nothing towards breathing into men the peculiar benevolence of the gospel; a benevolence which feels for, and seeks to elevate and save the human soul. It is time too, that, as a class of Christians, we should disappear, if we will not take our part in the great work of regenerating society. It is the order of nature, that the dead should be buried; and the sooner a dead, lifeless, soulless sect is buried and forgotten, the better. But, my friends, I cannot fear that you will be abandoned. Christian love, I trust, has called you to this work, and will cheer and strengthen you in your heavenly mission.

Go forth, then, my friends, with a confiding spirit. Go forth in the strength of faith, hope, and charity. Go forth to increase the holiness of earth and the happiness of heaven. Go to the dark alleys and the darker dwellings of the poor. Go in the spirit of that God, to whom the soul of the poor man is as precious as your own. Go

in the spirit of him, who for our sakes was poor, and had not where to lay his head. Go in reliance on that omnipotent grace, which can raise up the most fallen, cleanse the most polluted, enrich the poorest with more than royal wealth, console the deepest sorrows, and sanctify the sorest trials of life. Go cheerfully, for into the darkest dwellings you carry the light of life. And think not that you alone visit these humble habitations. God is there — Christ is there — angels are there. Feel their presence; breathe their love; and through your wise, unwearied, effectual labors may the poor man's dwelling become a consecrated place, the abode of love, "the house of God, and the gate of heaven."

B.P.L.
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